

In the Specification:

Please substitute the following paragraphs for the corresponding paragraphs beginning at the indicated location in the specification as originally filed.

(Page 1, lines 5+)

The present invention generally relates to electronic business (e-business) and, more particularly, to a Web site through which customers may search for products and services that are certified regarding certain aspects of ~~their business~~ the products and services.

(Page 2, lines 1+)

According to the invention, a Web site (named, for example, "certified.com") is established and maintained by a certification service. This certification service may be a stand alone business or a service sponsored by an existing business. If an existing business, the name of that business may be incorporated into the Web site (say, "certified.ibm.com") in order to induce or enhance customer trust in the certification service. The certification service assures the claims of a product or service provider by verifying and obtaining strict guarantees from the client providers (e.g., companies, individuals, etc.) whose Web sites and products or services are listed in the Web site. The certification can be restricted to apply only to a portion of a client provider Web site, product or service. In this way, the invention solves the problem of lack of knowledge about the trustworthiness of a Web site's products or services ~~Web sites~~ by providing "checking" services that verify the claims made by a Web business for its products or services. The checking is done via normal audit procedures, as is currently customary, and through ~~the~~ keeping of records.

(Page 2, lines 16+)

The invention is an Internet version of such assurances as UL listings and Good Housekeeping Seals of Approval so that customers can trust what they get from Web sites; however, the invention goes beyond just putting a seal on a product or service. Certified.com ~~It~~ clearly marks what claim about each item offered is certified. The client companies that list their business products pay certified.com fees for its certification of their Web site, and guarantee continued compliance with the certification by a contract with appropriate clauses in case of violations. Certified.com also generates revenue from advertisements on its Web page and hits made through its Web page search engine.